

# Stark County Family Court

Court of Common Pleas – Domestic and Juvenile Divisions

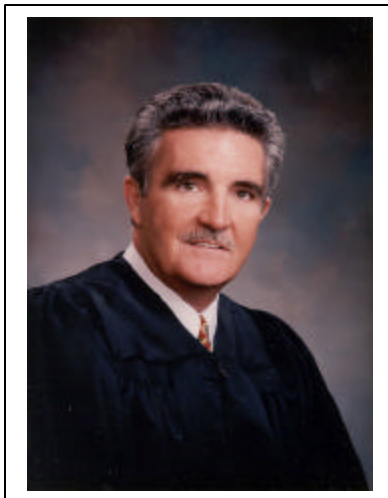


Annual Report – 2003

Judge John R. Hoffman

Judge David E. Stucki

Judge Jim D. James



**Judge John R. Hoffman** was elected to the bench of the Stark County Court of Common Pleas, Domestic Relations Division, in 1993. He is the Administrative Judge of the Juvenile Court and is Presiding Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for 2004. Judge Hoffman previously served as Assistant City Prosecutor for the City of Canton, Assistant City Solicitor for the City of Canton, Special Counsel for the Ohio Attorney General, and has served as a Jackson Township Trustee. Judge Hoffman has been active in the Stark County Bar Association, having served as Law Day Chairman, a member of the Executive Committee, Grievance Committee, and Courts Committee.

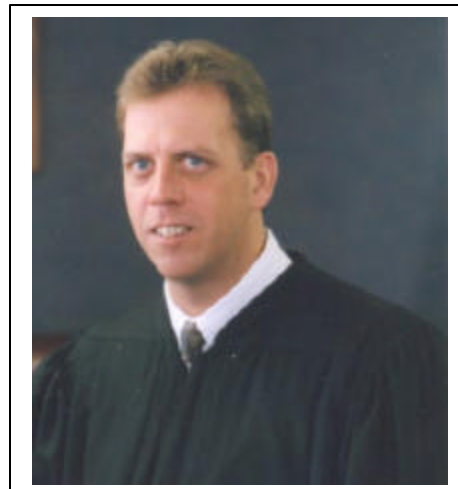
Judge Hoffman received his Bachelor of Arts degree Cum Laude from Kent State University and his Juris Doctorate Degree from Case Western Reserve University. He was admitted to practice in the State of Ohio in 1970. Judge Hoffman served as a Captain in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. He is also a member of the Ohio State Bar Association, National Council of Juvenile Court Judges, American Judges Association, the Ohio Family Law and Children's Task Force, as well as various State Juvenile and Family Court Associations. Recently he was elected Vice President of the Ohio Domestic Relations Judges Association and served as lecturer for the Judicial College.

Judge Hoffman announced that he would not seek another term as Judge of the Domestic Relations and Juvenile Divisions. He will complete his term and service to the Court and community in December of 2004.



**Judge David E. Stucki** was appointed to the bench of the Stark County Family Court in 1993 by Governor George Voinovich, was elected in November, 1994 and re-elected in 2000. Judge Stucki was elected in 1991 and served as a member of the Fairless Board of Education. He has served as a member of the Canton Regional Board of Review of the Industrial Commission of Ohio; Solicitor, Village of Wilmot; Westark Village Prosecutor; Law Clerk and Bailiff for Hon. Ira G. Turpin and for Hon. Richard T. Kettler.

Judge Stucki received his B.A. Degree, Cum Laude, from the University of Akron in 1981 and his J.D. Degree from the University of Akron School of Law in 1985, and was admitted to the practice of law in Ohio in 1985. He is a member of the Stark County and Ohio State Bar Associations and several other Judicial and Professional organizations. Judge Stucki has been recognized for his judicial leadership when he was chosen by Governor Voinovich and then reappointed by Governor Bob Taft to serve on the Governor's Council on Juvenile Justice as Vice-Chairman. The Council serves as an advisory board to the Governor on statewide Juvenile Justice issues. Judge Stucki is in the leadership chairs of the Ohio Juvenile Judges Association, presently serving as secretary. Judge Stucki is often "on the bench" 7 days a week including his judicial duties, coaching youth sports and playing the organ in his church. Judge Stucki and his wife Paula are the active parents of two daughters and one son.



**Judge Jim D. James** was elected to a full term as a Judge of the Common Pleas Court, Domestic Relations and Juvenile Division commencing January 1, 2001. He was appointed to the bench in 1999 by Governor Taft and previously presided over cases at the Court as its Chief Magistrate for ten years.

Judge James is chairman of the Ohio Judicial Conference's Family Law and Procedure Committee, is President-elect of the Ohio Association of Domestic Relations Judges, and is a member of the National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judge's Legislative Committee. He is a frequent presenter as a faculty member for the Ohio Supreme Court's Legislative Committee. The Judge is the County's representative on the Muskingum Watershed District Conservancy Court, a statutory court made up of Common Pleas Judges from each of the districts eighteen counties. This year, Judge James has been elected First Vice President to the 700 member Stark County Bar Association.

Prior to joining the Family Court in 1983, Judge James served as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for Stark County as well as Washington County. The Judge is a graduate of Capital University and obtained his J.D. degree from the Capital University Law School. Judge James was appointed by the Stark County Commissioners to serve on the Citizens Advisory Committee for Non-Violence. He is a member of the United Methodist Church. He is a past volunteer Fire Chief, firefighter and medic. Judge James and wife Yvonne are parents of two sons.



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## **Commissioners Jackson, Vignos, and Regula**

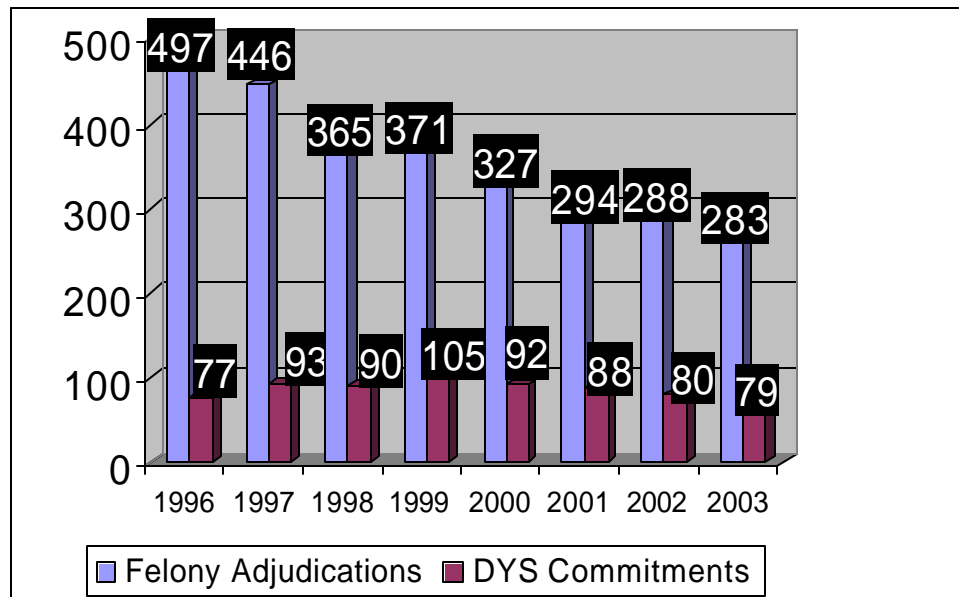
In compliance with ORC Section 2152.71, we hereby submit the annual report of the Court of Common Pleas of Stark County, Domestic Relations and Juvenile Divisions covering the calendar year of 2003.

On behalf of the staff, we express our appreciation to the Board of County Commissioners, the citizens of Stark County, public and private agencies who cooperate in efforts to serve the families and youth of Stark County. The enclosed reports are summaries of the work of the Judges, Magistrates and employees who attempt to balance the safety of the community with the best interests of children and families.

### **Stark County Court of Common Pleas – Domestic and Juvenile Divisions**

Judge John R. Hoffman, Judge David E. Stucki and Judge Jim D. James are elected as Judges of the Domestic Relations Court. In Stark County, the Juvenile Court falls under the jurisdiction of the Domestic Relations Division of the Court of Common Pleas. This court has been known as the Stark County Family Court for well over 30 years.

In 2003, the Domestic Relations Division and Juvenile Division closed 16,682 cases. This number is a slight decrease over the total number of cases closed in 2002. There are a few other numbers of significance: Domestic Relations cases of child support and modifications are up 86% from 1999. In the Juvenile Court there was a 12.6% decrease in the number of delinquent and unruly cases closed from 2002 and felony cases continue to follow the national trend. 2003 was the seventh year in a row that the total number of felony adjudications have decrease (see chart below). The number of alcohol and drug cases remained at the same number as 2002. The number of sex offenders continued at the high level reached last year. Unruly offenses have decreased again in part because chronic truancy is now considered a delinquency offense and the number of cases filed by parents against their own children is down.



## **Juvenile Court**

The Juvenile Court is best known for two types of cases that capture most of the attention of the more than seven different types of cases coming before the Court. When a law is broken, and at the time of the crime the person was under 18, the case must go to the Juvenile Court. Most juvenile offenders are tried in the Juvenile Division of the Family Court, where dispositions (sentences) for delinquent juveniles include monitoring, probation, restitution, referrals to community agencies, placement in the Juvenile Attention Center, placement in a residential treatment facility, or placement in an institution operated by the State Department of Youth Services, possibly to the age of 21. Juveniles, age 14 and older, who commit serious crimes may be transferred to adult court at the discretion of the Juvenile Judge. Juveniles age 16 and 17 who are charged with certain serious felony offenses, including murder, must be transferred to the adult court if the Judge finds probable cause to believe that the juvenile committed the offense. Adult sentences apply in juvenile cases transferred to adult court, except the death sentence cannot be imposed for any crime committed before age 18. Senate Bill 179 has further enhanced the sentencing options in Juvenile Court. Courts can now label offenders as Serious Youthful Offenders and suspend an adult prison sentence based on the successful completion of a juvenile sentence.

The second group of cases the Court is known for are the abuse, neglect and dependency cases. When a case of child abuse or neglect is reported, The Stark County Department of Jobs and Family Services, Children Services Division (SCDJFS), will investigate and if necessary, file a complaint in the Juvenile Court. At every stage of a juvenile court proceeding, the court's obligation is to act in the best interest of the child. If the child is at risk, he or she may be placed with a relative or in a foster home under SCDJFS supervision. The court may order the parents to receive counseling or other social services. The court ultimately has the authority to terminate parental rights. If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, call the SCDJFS 24-hour hotline, 330-451-kids.

The Juvenile Division of the Court of Common Pleas has jurisdiction to hear the following types of cases:

- **Delinquent youth** - those who have committed an offense, prior to their 18th birthday, that would be a crime if committed by an adult.
- **Unruly youth** - those who have committed a status offense that only applies to someone under the age of 18.
- **Juvenile Traffic Offender** - anyone who has committed a traffic offense prior to attaining the age of 18.
- **Abused children** - those children who have been physically or sexually abused by parents, guardians or other adult.
- **Neglected children** - those children who are not properly cared for or are abandoned by their parent or guardians.
- **Dependent children** - those children who are without proper care or support through no fault of their parent or guardian.
- **Adult Cases** - criminal violations filed against adults who have contributed to the delinquency or unruliness of a juvenile.
- **Paternity** - an action to determine the father of a given child born out of wedlock.
- **Custody** - to determine the custody of any child not a ward of another court of this state.

## **Domestic Relations Division**

The Domestic Relations Division of the Court of Common Pleas provides hearings and services to families that will ensure a fair, just and timely resolution of the cases brought before it. The Court hears and makes determinations in the following types of cases:

- **Divorce** - an action to terminate a marriage in which there is dispute as to the actual termination, custody, support, companionship, property settlement, or as to any other issue.
- **Dissolution** - an action to terminate a marriage in which both parties agree to the issues of custody, companionship, support, property settlement, or as to any other issue.
- **Change of Custody** - a motion filed in a case to request that the Court change the actual custody of a child to another party.
- **Visitation** or companionship- an action or motion to establish the times and days in which each parent will be with the child.
- **Support Enforcement** - an action to set, review or order the amount of child support to be paid or to establish the rules under which the support shall be paid.
- **Domestic Violence** - a complaint of a threat of or actual assault against a family member can be filed in Domestic Relations Court.
- **Contempt Action and other cases** - a violation of the Court's orders or any special request or review by the Court.

## **Summary**

The Court has been involved with community efforts to avoid duplication and to provide efficient services for children and families. The Court is an active participant in the planning process with other child serving agencies around the issues of prevention and planning of direct services to children and families. In response to the varied needs of families, the Court works with schools, law enforcement, public and private agencies, private business, The Stark County Family Council, parents, parent advocates, and other organizations in order to provide comprehensive programs. The Court receives grants from the Ohio Department of Youth Services, United Way of Stark County, collaborative grants with The Stark County Family Council, United Way of Stark County, Girl Scouts of America, and the North Canton Eagles in order to provide programs and services for juveniles and families. The Court cannot resolve all the community's problems but can work with and assist others in seeing that juveniles and families are given adequate opportunity to resolve problems and prevent further court actions.

## **Judicial Staff**

### **Hon. John R. Hoffman**

**Administrative Judge – Juvenile Court**

**William Manos- Bailiff**

**Amy Brahler- Secretary**

### **Hon. David E. Stucki**

**Administrative Judge-Domestic Relations**

**Audrey Sparks – Law Clerk**

**Patti Bucci- Secretary**

### **Hon. Jim D. James**

**Judge**

**Peggie Conner – Law Clerk**

**Lorraine Lewis- Secretary**

The Judges of the Court oversee and direct the operations of the Domestic Relations and Juvenile Court. Each Judge hires one Law Clerk and one Secretary to handle the work of their office.

## **Administration**

**Richard DeHeer**

**Court Administrator**

The Court Administrator is responsible for the overall operation of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court at the directions of the Judges. He is responsible for administering the wage and salary systems, selecting, training, developing, evaluating, and disciplining of non-judicial staff. He also assists in preparation of the Court budget, technology applications, planning physical space needs, and recommending and evaluating programs for the juveniles and families that come before the Court.

Mr. DeHeer has a BA in sociology and an MA in Counseling and has been with the Court since 1973. He is serving as a board member of the Multi-County Juvenile Attention System, board and executive committee member of the Stark County Family Council, Member of United Way's Vision Council, and has served as President of the Ohio Urban Juvenile Court Administrator's Association. He was appointed to the Supreme Court's Advisory Committee on Children, Families, and the Courts. This committee was established by

Chief Justice Thomas Moyer and will offer recommendations to the Supreme Court on the Guardian Ad Litem Task Force report, the Ohio Family Code Report, the Juvenile Data Network, and the Family Law and Children Report.

### **Deb Reinart**

**Business Manager**

The Business Manager is responsible for the daily activity in all Court accounts. This includes completing the payroll, making purchases, leases, supplies, and paying the bills for all employees and programs of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.

Mrs. Reinart has been with the Court for over thirty years. She has served the Court in the Domestic Relations Division, as the first computer specialist of the Court, and as the Juvenile Assignment Commissioner.

**Victoria Herring- Administrative Secretary**

## **Magistrates**

Magistrates are appointed by the Judges to assist them in hearing cases. All magistrates are attorneys with extensive experience in Family Law. The Family Court has seven magistrates, six full-time and one who hears cases and also coordinates the Court's mediation program. Magistrates conduct hearings in divorces, custody disputes, paternity actions, child support modifications, abuse, neglect, dependency cases, juvenile traffic cases, and delinquency cases. Few magistrates in the State hear the diversity of cases heard by our Family Court Magistrates. They are empowered to make orders or decisions. Litigants have the right to object to a magistrate's order or decision, and to have that ruling reviewed by the Judge assigned to the case.

Stark County's Magistrates know that prevention is the key to solving delinquency, and they are strongly committed to serving community organizations which help youth. These include Character Counts, Habitat for Humanity, North Canton Community Intervention, various local church programs, Domestic Violence Task Force, United Way, Tutoring programs at local schools and coaching youth sports teams.

**Michael L. Howard**  
**Chief Magistrate**

Mr. Howard served Family Court from 1974 to 1979 as an Intake Officer and Law Clerk for Judge W. Don Reader. He has served as a Magistrate of the Court since 1991 and became Chief Magistrate in 1999. Magistrate Howard is a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University and The University of Akron School of Law. He is a Certified Public Accountant and was a Senior Tax Manager at Deloitte & Touche in Seattle, Washington. He also served as Vice President of Finance for two real estate development companies. While living in Seattle, Magistrate Howard was a volunteer Guardian Ad Litem for abused and neglected children. In addition to his duties at Stark County Family Court, he is Chair of the Family Law Committee of the Stark County Bar Association and serves on the Bar Applicant Committee. Magistrate Howard is Vice President of the Canton Museum of Art, serves on the Executive Committee of United Way, the board of trustees of the Stark Education Partnership, the advisory board of the North Canton Alumni Association, and the Staff Parish Relations Committee of Faith United Methodist Church. He is a past president of the North Canton Community Intervention Committee.

**Sally Efremoff**  
**Magistrate**

Sally Efremoff has been a Magistrate for Family Court since January 1996. Prior to serving the Court as a Magistrate, she served as a Law Clerk and Bailiff for Judge David E. Stucki from 1993 through 1995. She received her B.A. Degree and J.D. Degree from the University of Michigan. Magistrate Efremoff served as a Trust Officer at the Union Commerce Bank in Cleveland, Ohio and as an Instructor at Case Western Reserve Law School. Ms. Efremoff was a member of the Plain Local School Board for fourteen years and now serves as the President of the Plain Local foundation. She is a member of the United Way of Stark County Board of Trustees, Co-Chairman of Character Counts!, Co-chairman of the United Way Community Partnership, a Trustee of Malone College, Secretary of the Stark State College of Technology Foundation Board, a member of

the Stark Educational Service Center Business Advisory Committee and the Stark County Bar Association.

**John E. Myers**  
**Magistrate**

John Myers has been a Magistrate with the Family Court since January of 1992. Prior to serving the Court as Magistrate, Mr. Myers was Law Clerk and Bailiff for Judge W. Don Reader beginning in May of 1988. He received a B.A. in Corrections from Kent State University in 1980 and his J.D. from the University of Akron School of Law in 1990. Mr. Myers was formerly employed by the Portage County Juvenile Court, is a former youth baseball coach, and a counsel member at his church.

**Constance Butera**  
**Magistrate**

Constance Butera received her B.A. degree in 1979 from Walsh University and graduated from Akron's School of Law in 1982. After a brief stint with Legal Aid, several years as an Assistant Canton City Prosecutor, and several more years in private practice, she joined Family Court in 1991 as a magistrate. She is active in Habitat for Humanity of Greater Canton and has served on the Board and as Secretary to the Board of Directors for the last several years. A 1990 graduate of Leadership Canton, she has continued her volunteer role with the Balloon Festival for more than eight years.

**David Nist**  
**Magistrate**

David R. Nist has been a Magistrate at the Stark County Family Court since January 1997. Magistrate Nist previously served as a staff attorney for the Stark County Child Support Enforcement Agency. He also served as the agency attorney for the Coshocton County Child Support Enforcement Bureau, as well as legal intern for the City of Massillon Law Department. Mr. Nist is a graduate of the University of Dayton and received his J.D. Degree from the University of Akron School of Law. Mr. Nist is a member of the Stark County Bar Association Family Law Committee and assists in training volunteers participating in the Stark County Teen Court diversion program.



**Ali Frantz  
Magistrate**

Magistrate Ali L. Frantz received her undergraduate degree, Summa Cum Laude, from Walsh College, and completed law school at the University of Akron School of Law. She was admitted to the Practice of Law and the Ohio Bar in 1987. She was in private practice for ten (10) years, with a primary focus on Family Law. Following this tenure as a private practitioner, Ms. Frantz joined the Legal Department for the Child Protective Division of the Stark County Department of Jobs and Family Services in 1997. Magistrate Frantz was appointed to the position of Magistrate at Family Court in February of 1999. Ms. Frantz is married to her husband, Greg. They have two (2) adult children.

**Norma Blank  
Magistrate**

Ms. Blank began working for the Family Court in 1992, when she developed the Court's Mediation Services Program. Several years later she assumed responsibilities as a Court Magistrate, while continuing to serve as Coordinator of Mediation Services. She is a graduate of Hiram College, obtained a Master's of Social Science Administration from Case Western reserve University in 1976, and received her J.D. degree from the University of Akron in 1984. Prior to coming to this Court, Magistrate Blank worked for the Summit County Children Services Board, where she was Director of Legal Services, for the Summit County Juvenile Court, where she served as a Referee, and for the Summit County Domestic Relations Court where she implemented their mediation program. Magistrate Blank is a part-time instructor at the University of Akron, where she teaches basic mediation and divorce mediation. She serves as a volunteer Legal Guardian for adult women judged to be incompetent by the Summit County Probate Court.

**Chris Hudy – Magistrate Secretary**

**Juvenile Intake**

**Robert Fernandez  
Deputy Administrator**

**Nancy Boylan-Intake Officer  
Adriann Thornberry -Intake Officer  
Kitty Zindren -Intake Officer  
Ed Lenzy -Intake Officer  
Stephanie Henschen -Intake  
Community Worker  
Kim Grant-DNA Case Coordinator  
Michelle Spees-DNA Case Coordinator  
Betty Watkins-Juvenile Assignment  
Commissioner  
Rachel Currie-Ass't Assignment  
Commissioner  
Bevin Staley- Records Clerk  
Vicki Cano -Intake Secretary  
Laura White- Intake Secretary**

The Intake Department is the receiving and processing unit for all complaints filed with the Juvenile Division of the Court. The delinquency and unruly unit is comprised of four Intake Officers, an Intake Community Worker, two Truancy Interventionists, Records Room Clerk and two secretaries. The unit has responsibility for reviewing case files, setting up hearings, notifying victims and other parties to a case, gathering background information, conducting hearings at detention and making recommendations to the Court about sentencing. This unit had involvement with the juveniles, families, schools and others of the 369 unruly complaints and the 2,786 delinquency cases closed in 2003.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Unruly	567	457	369
Delinquent	3,190	3,155	2,786
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,757</b>	<b>3,612</b>	<b>3,155</b>

The dependency, neglect and abuse unit (DNA) helped process 1,077 cases filed with the Court in 2003. The Stark County Department of Jobs and Family Services files about 75% of these cases after an investigation and determination that a hearing is necessary to determine the status and or custody of a child or children. This unit

coordinates the hearing dates, assists the Department of Jobs and Family Services in notification of the parties and works with attorneys, guardian-ad-litem, and others in seeing that the hearings proceed.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
DNA	1,014	1,014	1,045
Perm Cust	84	117	104
Cus & Vis	270	223	308
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,368</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>1,457</b>

### **Truancy Mediation**

An innovative program that uses mediation to reduce school truancy is producing positive results. In Sept of 1998 the Canton City Schools and the Stark County Family Court began the Truancy Mediation Program. Five Canton elementary schools came forward to participate as pilot schools in the first year of the program. The program began with financial assistance from the Discipline Intervention Challenge grant through the Ohio Dept of Education. Today the program has grown to include all 17 elementary schools, four middle schools, freshman academy and both high schools. The goal of the Truancy Mediation program is to increase school attendance and facilitate communication between parents and teachers.

The mediation process consists of an informal meeting where the parent and teacher come together with the mediator at the school. The purpose of the meeting is to talk about the reasons for absences and to come to agreement resolving this problem. By coming up with an agreement, the TM program allows parents to settle truancy problems without going to court. This program helps parents and teachers identify the underlying issues that are keeping the child from attending school and make agreements that address those issues and results in improved attendance. Prior to this program being introduced the only option available to schools was to pursue charges against parents and/or students in the Family Court. The Truancy Mediation program focuses on prevention and early intervention

The court appointed mediator is a trained person who does not take sides. The role of the mediator is to make sure that

everyone has an opportunity to speak, that all sides understand each other, and that both families and schools work together to resolve issues. Truancy Mediation is not about winning or losing but it is about giving parents the opportunity to get more involved in their children's education and to help them learn.

The Court pays for the services of the trained mediator to be available to the schools. The schools pay for a substitute teacher to be at the school so the child's teacher can attend the on site mediation. Over the last six-years the Court and Canton City Schools have received some financial assistance from the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management. The commission has been providing program support and independent evaluation as Truancy Mediation has expanded across the state.

Evaluation conducted by Luminesce Consulting in the 2001-02 school year, revealed that unexcused absence by chronically truant students whose cases were mediated dropped by at least 26% and in some cases 91%. In 2003, a review of six counties in the state including Stark County, the consultants found that of mediated cases in Canton City Schools the students had missed an average of thirteen days prior to the mediation meeting. After mediation took place the students missed only an average of two days during the remainder of the school year. The decrease in absence continued the following school year. The study showed that the average absence for these students in the 2002-03 school year, was a little more than four days.

Although no case is typical, one case exemplifies the effectiveness of the Truancy Mediation Program. Karen (not her real name) is a child attending an elementary school in Canton City. Prior to the mediation Karen had missed 15 days of school. The school felt these absences were questionable as they were not the direct result of personal illness or injury. As often occurs, Karen's mother came to the school mediation feeling a need to defend her daughter's absences. As the mediation progressed, all parties began to realize that Karen was pretending to be ill because she was having a difficult time

getting along with her peers. She was doing things in class and on the playground that students had begun making fun of. Karen was often in tears and would often be in the clinic complaining of being sick and wanting to go home. At this point in the mediation a shift took place. Karen's mom and teacher became a team and began to focus on strategies that would improve both Karen's attendance and her relationships with her peers. Some of the solutions found in the agreement, were: Karen's mom would call and report to the school if Karen was truly sick. Karen's mom would send her to the school nurse if she questioned whether Karen was sick rather than keep her at home. Karen's teacher would identify a classmate who would walk to and from school with Karen. Karen's teacher would provide supplemental schoolwork that Karen's mom would review with Karen at home to fill in the gaps in learning. Finally, a consultation with the school counselor would be set up if Karen continued to have problems relating with her peers or patterns of absences resurfaced. The result of the mediation was that Karen had no further incidents of tearfulness, no visits to the clinic, no absences during the second semester last year, and had no absences thru the first semester of this school year.

In 2001 Superintendent Talarico had seen the success of this program and was a proponent of expanding this program into all Canton City Schools. Similarly Judges Hoffman, Stucki, and James supported this program from the beginning and willingly provided mediators for the program expansion. In 2003, when the budget reductions hit the County, the Judges ordered an increase in court costs that would provide funds to pay for the mediators. At a recent meeting of school and court personnel, more successes were discovered. There has been a significant decrease in the number of truancy complaints filed with the Court filed over the last five (5) years by Canton City Schools. The number of complaints of truancy filed this school year is down by over 100 complaints.

Mediation is one effective way to deal with excessive absence problems that arise in schools. Schools, Courts, parents, and the community should be partners in seeing that

students are being successful in school. Superintendent Talarico and Judges Hoffman, Stucki, and James are committed to continue this prevention effort as it is truly in the best interests of students and the community. They all joined in stating that successful students will be an asset to our community in the future.

## **Juvenile Pre-Trial Services**

**Larry Durian-Supervisor**

**Veronica Earley Pre-Trial Officer**

**Abbey Leonard- Pre-Trial Officer**

**Kim Ball- Pre-Trial Officer**

Since 1999 this program service has been funded by the Juvenile Accountability and Incentive Block Grant program through the Bureau of Grants Administration within the Department of Youth Services in Columbus. During this initial grant process a Juvenile Justice Crime Coalition was established among Stark County law enforcement departments and community resource agencies to partner with Family Court to address specific needs of those partners. The partners based on an analysis of local juvenile justice needs developed a Juvenile Crime Enforcement Plan. The plan has continued to positively impact the community by reducing juvenile delinquency, improving the juvenile justice system, and increasing accountability for juvenile offenders.

Three critical Purpose Areas have been identified for program goals and objectives of the grant: *The first Purpose Area is developing and administering accountability-based sanctions for juvenile offenders.* Two categories under this area have been recognized: 1) Electronic Monitoring House Arrest is maintained by two Stark County vendors who provide hook up and disconnect services through the Pre-Trial Program. The monitoring is maintained in cooperation with the vendors through the three court officers and the court supervisor. Objectives for the year were estimated at monitoring 125 youth

on ankle bracelet. **We actually processed 166 youth, exceeding the goal by 41 teens .**

2) Intensive Supervision of juveniles referred into this program is the second category in this purpose area. Services include one to seven weekly contacts of juveniles at home, in school or at their place of employment in addition to daily phone communication to assure continuous adherence to court orders. Our objective for the year was to supervise and provide pre-dispositional recommendations for 125 teens. **This goal, too, was exceeded by 16 teens. A total of 141 juveniles were intensively supervised in our Pre-Trial Program.** In past years, the possibility existed that the teens supervised in these two categories would have been held in the Juvenile Attention Center until their trial or disposition was completed.

*The second Purpose Area includes court personnel and funding pre-trial services to ensure the smooth and expeditious administration of the juvenile justice system.* In September, 2002 Kimberly Ball, a Walsh College Intern was hired on a part-time basis. This graduating senior's hard work and attention to detail was an added benefit to our court team, and in January, 2003, Ms. Ball was offered a full time position as a court officer in this program.

*Our third Purpose Area involves providing drug testing for juveniles in the Stark County juvenile justice system.* The Intake Department, Probation, and the Pre-Trial Program, as well as the medical staff at the Juvenile Attention Center have administered a total of 147 drug tests through the Pre-Trial grant. Marijuana was reported as the most used drug of choice as indicated from the surveys.

Coalition partners from the law enforcement community include Canton Police Department, Stark County Sheriff Department, Jackson Township Police Department, Perry Township Police

Department, Massillon Police Department and the Alliance Police Department.

## **Juvenile Clerk**

### **Jean Clayton-Supervisor**

**Barbara Bergmeyer-Traffic Clerk**  
**Lana Eggenschwiler – Juvenile Clerk**  
**Jennifer Hendry- Traffic Clerk**  
**JoAnn Moore- Juvenile Clerk**  
**Theresa Joy- Juvenile Clerk**  
**Nicole Scates- Juvenile Clerk**  
**Robert Thompson- Juvenile Clerk**  
**Solomon Meese- Juvenile Clerk**

The Juvenile Clerk's office is an integral part of the Juvenile Court as all documents, complaints, motions, service of summons, and judgment entries must be properly filed here. The Deputy Clerk Supervisor assigns each of the eight clerks' to a specific case type and each clerk works with one of the units of the Intake Department. Every case filed with the Juvenile Court is processed through the Clerk's office. The computerization of the Court began with the Clerk's operation, as they are responsible for entering a great deal of the data held by the Court. The Court is continuing to enhance its computer operations to enable the Court to manage the increasing numbers of cases and documents handled each year.

The juvenile traffic unit is responsible for notifying juveniles and parents of their rights and responsibilities for hearings set before the Court. There were 3,144 juvenile traffic offender cases closed in 2003. Over \$250,000 was collected in fines and costs and distributed to local agencies, the State and the County in 2003.

The following reports are a summary of juvenile cases closed by the Court.

## Delinquent and Unruly Cases Closed

<b>Offense</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>Property Offenses Total</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>1022</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>836</b>
Aggravated Burglary	1	4	0	4	2
Burglary	62	47	49	46	41
B&E	24	49	50	41	23
Criminal Trespass	94	91	107	96	86
Petty Theft	417	427	401	412	389
Felony Theft	53	70	45	50	44
Receiving and Concealing	72	74	61	64	42
Forgery	3	4	0	1	2
UUMV	35	25	22	40	31
Arson	10	13	10	11	8
Vandalism	13	27	13	14	7
Criminal Damaging	98	90	101	122	100
Criminal Mischief	63	84	73	40	43
Unauthorized use of Prop	0	0	0	0	0
Possession Criminal Tools	4	7	2	3	1
Misuse of Credit Card	1	5	3	2	1
Other property offenses	9	5	6	9	26
<b>Violent Offenses Total</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>447</b>
Aggravated Murder	2	3	1	0	2
Murder and Vol Manslaughter	2	0	1	2	1
Vehicular Homicide	2	0	2	3	1
Assault	206	216	187	233	210
Felonious Assault	31	21	8	20	29
Domestic Violence	129	157	127	133	151
Aggravated Robbery	8	6	5	9	0
Robbery	11	8	9	14	13
Aggravated Menacing	32	24	16	26	19
Menacing	23	28	12	20	21
Kidnapping	0	0	0	0	0
Other violent offenses	1	0	4	2	0
<b>Sex Offenses Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>62</b>
Rape	4	15	6	19	23
Gross Sexual Imposition	24	23	17	26	19
Sexual Imposition	3	3	8	2	5
Felonious Penetration	0	0	0	0	0
Other sex offenses	8	10	8	13	15

<b>Offenses Con't</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>Weapon Offenses Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>
Carrying Concealed Weapon	17	21	21	13	9
Possession Deadly weapon	11	6	15	13	8
Improper Handling: MV	0	0	4	0	0
Other	0	2	0	0	3
<b>Drug Offenses Total</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>169</b>
Trafficking	7	14	3	12	18
Drug Abuse	116	106	69	74	86
Drug Paraphernalia	38	64	64	53	58
Harmful Intoxicant	1	4	0	12	0
Counterfeit Drugs	0	0	0	0	0
Other Drug Offenses	14	13	13	3	7
<b>Alcohol Offenses Total</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>205</b>
DUI	28	26	15	12	12
Underage Consumption	218	291	222	206	193
<b>Offenses Against Justice Total</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>246</b>
Disorderly Conduct	170	171	165	145	156
Resisting Arrest	22	25	15	31	15
Inducing Panic	0	0	0	0	0
False Alarms	2	8	10	4	4
Riot	0	0	1	0	2
Disrupting Public Service	0	0	0	0	0
Obstructing Justice	0	33	42	27	27
Failure to Comply	0	0	0	0	10
Other Offenses - Justice	14	32	38	34	32
<b>Court Offenses</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>584</b>
Violation of Court Order	697	746	769	738	580
Escape	6	3	6	5	4
<b>Other Delinquent Offenses Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>217</b>
Telephone Harassment	4	11	6	6	12
Chronic Truancy		45	305	238	169
Other Offenses	149	90	53	52	36
<b>Unruly Offenses Total</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>369</b>
Habitual Truancy	188	329	31	13	7
Curfew	75	115	120	81	70
Unruly Child	424	406	336	285	249
Law Pertaining to Minors	26	35	80	78	43
<b>Cases Closed Totals</b>	<b>3,672</b>	<b>4,132</b>	<b>3,757</b>	<b>3,612</b>	<b>3,155</b>

# Juvenile Characteristics

Cases Closed – 2003

Gender and Case Type					
	Cases			Percentage	
	Delinquent	Unruly	Total	Delinquent	Unruly
Male	1,887	200	2,087	90%	10%
Female	898	169	1,067	84%	16%
Data Unavailable	0	0	0		
Total	2,785	369	3,155	88%	12%
Race					
	Cases		Percentage		
White	2,294		72.7%		
African-American	831		26.3 %		
Other Race or unk	30		1.0%		
Total	3,155		100.0%		
Age and Prior Involvement					
	No Prior	Prior	Total		Percent of Total
Age 10 and Under	13	36	49		1.6%
Age 11	27	37	64		2.0%
Age 12	35	95	130		4.1%
Age 13	130	137	267		8.5%
Age 14	183	211	394		12.5%
Age 15	280	245	525		16.6%
Age 16	400	280	680		21.6%
Age 17	477	305	782		24.8%
Age 18	161	95	256		8.1%
Unknown		8			.02%
Total	1,706	1,449	3,155		100.00%
School District					
Alliance	216			North Canton	102
Canton City	1,046			Northwest	65
Canton Local	59			Osnaburg	15
Fairless	54			Perry	113
Jackson	91			Plain	269
Lake	82			Sandy Valley	51
Louisville	85			Tuslaw	33
Marlington	69			Not in School	42
Massillon	296			Out of County	73
Minerva	45			Other or Unknown	349
				Total	3,155

# Juvenile Division

## 1998 – 2003

### Summary of Cases Closed

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>Total Del &amp; Unr</b>	<b>3,730</b>	<b>3,672</b>	<b>4,132</b>	<b>3,757</b>	<b>3,612</b>	<b>3,155</b>
<u>Unruly</u>	806	713	884	567	457	369
<u>Delinquent</u>	2,924	2,959	3,248	3,190	3,155	2,786
<b>Total Traffic</b>	<b>3,868</b>	<b>3,920</b>	<b>3,233</b>	<b>3,371</b>	<b>3,485</b>	<b>3,144</b>
<b>Total Dep, Neg, Abu</b>	<b>1,256</b>	<b>1,220</b>	<b>1,339</b>	<b>1,368</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>1,457</b>
<u>Dep, Neg &amp; Abuse</u>	905	811	969	1,014	960	1,045
<u>Motion for Perm Cus</u>	79	134	133	84	117	104
<u>Custody &amp; Visitation</u>	272	275	237	270	223	308
<b>Total Adult</b>	<b>1,289</b>	<b>1,568</b>	<b>1,575</b>	<b>1,693</b>	<b>1,383</b>	<b>1,688</b>
<u>Supp Enforce Modif</u>	618	897	994	1,035	880	1,267
<u>Paternity</u>	323	395	374	486	297	317
<u>URES</u>	264	175	132	120	137	59
<u>Adult</u>	84	101	75	52	69	45
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Total Cases Closed</b>	<b>10,262</b>	<b>10,453</b>	<b>10,308</b>	<b>10,233</b>	<b>9,798</b>	<b>9,455</b>



## **Probation Department**

### **Joyce Salapack Chief Probation Officer**

**Probation Officer-Alliance-Ann  
Clemson**

**Probation Officer-Massillon-Andy  
Betro**

**Probation Officer-Cary Brown**

**Probation Officer Specialist-Tim  
Carter**

**Probation Officer-Jennifer Crable**

**Probation Officer-Lori Cole**

**Probation Officer-John Leyda**

**Probation Officer- Specialist-Kevin  
Meers**

**Probation Officer-Celeste Noe**

**Probation Officer-Cathy Vesco**

**Probation Officer-Patti Wilson**

**Probation Officer-Tim Wires**

**Probation Secretary-Vicki Ruegg**

**Office Mgr-Alliance-Linda Cuerbo**

**Officer Mgr-Massillon-Kaye Stone**

Probation is a legal status created in the Ohio Revised Code and ordered by the Court, which permits a juvenile to remain in the community under the supervision and guidance of a Probation Officer. The Probation Officer determines the length of sentence based on the orders of the Court and the progress of the juvenile and the family in successfully completing the goals of probation.

The Probation Department consists of an Administrator, 12 Probation Officers and 3 secretaries. The Juvenile Probation Department works out of three offices, the central office located in the County Office Building in Canton, a satellite office in the Alliance City Hall and also one in the Massillon City Hall. The Judges and Magistrates of the Juvenile Court placed 412 juveniles on probation in 2003. Probation Officer's caseloads ranged from 35 to 40 during the year of 2003.

The Juvenile Sex Offender unit has many functions. In addition to supervising

sex offenders, they are involved in treatment for the offender, participating in group therapy with the offenders at their respective counseling agencies, and following the assigned cases from arraignment to final disposition. They also conduct pre-sentence investigations for their clients, develop safety plans, refer offenders for evaluations, provide background information to assessors, make school, home, and community contacts, offer recommendations and insight to the prosecutor's office and defense counsel. They also attend all formal court hearings, conduct informal hearings, and give presentations on the treatment of sex offenders in the community.

The sex offender unit is made up of Kevin Meers, who is the Sex Offender specialist and Tim Carter who handles both sex offenders and other delinquents on his caseload. This unit handled 60 juvenile sex offender cases in 2003. 34 of these cases were assigned probation and/or intensive wrap around services. The remaining 16 juveniles were committed to an institution operated by the Ohio Department of Youth Services.

Vicki Ruegg, secretary for the Central Office, is responsible to the Probation Administrator and for the work of 10 Probation Officers. In addition to her normal duties and activities, she processed 89 commitments to the Ohio Department of Youth Services for the year 2003, and prepared and scheduled requests for twenty-five early release hearings from DYS facilities. She is also responsible for maintaining monthly, quarterly and yearly reports for the probation department and for the Department of Youth Services, processing new probation cases, completing discharge orders after probationers have successfully completed probation, filing warrants, and violation of prior court order charges and other requests submitted by the staff assigned to the Central Office.

In 2003, Probation Officers attended workshops and conferences on Child Sex Offenders on the Internet, Sexual Violent Offender, Youth Courts and Team Building. The Probation Department also participated with the Department of Criminal Justice at Kent State University, University of Akron,

Bowling Green University, Stark State Technical College and Mount Union College in providing internship opportunities. This allows qualified students to participate in the day-to-day activities of the department and assist with the supervision of juveniles. The Court would like to thank Theresa Greenlief and Stephanie Henschen for their efforts as interns in the year 2002.

The Alliance and Massillon satellite offices are responsible for a number of activities. In addition to an assigned probation caseload, the staff at Alliance processed and/or closed 79 cases informally. Many of the informal cases were diverted to Anger Management classes handled by Quest.

Juveniles on probation during 2003 also completed tours of the Stark County Jail, which were provided by the Alliance staff. Thirty (30) juveniles participated in a ropes/team building program through camp Muskingum. This is a beneficial program, which teaches team skills and helps develop and build self-esteem. Others participated in clean-up programs with the park service, church service, and community cleanup, and assisted with Habitat for Humanity.

In addition to their daily duties and responsibilities, Probation Officers and their staff were involved in the following activities: Andy Betro is now a Teen Court co-facilitator and is active speaking with various groups in the community. Celeste Noe works with the Teen Court program in addition to her probation duties. Celeste was hired as a probation officer having been the first PO to have been a teen volunteer in the Teen Court program. Tim Carter is involved with Child and Adolescent Center and Northeast Ohio behavioral Health with sex offender groups. The office is also involved in the on-going tours of the Stark County Jail, that occur 4 to 5 times a year for probationers and participation and planning for high and low rope challenge experiences at Camp Muskingum for probationers.

Members of the Probation Department are very involved in the community and participate as board members and advisors. Kevin Meers is a standing member of the Stark County Multi-

Disciplinary Task Force and the head coach for the girl's varsity basketball team at Canton South High School. Joyce Salapack is President of the Exchange Club, and is on the TASC at Lake High School. She is also involved in career programs at all the schools located in eastern Stark County, involved with the Hall of Fame Festival and serves as a committee member, and has been a chaperon for Lake Middle School activities.

## **Teen Court**

Teen Court is not an unfamiliar program in the Stark County area. Defendants, parents, and area teenagers regularly inquire about how to become involved in the Teen Court process. Students at McKinley and GlenOak must apply to be in the program and each year the number of applicants grows. Each sixteen-week session allows for about eighteen students from each school. Expanding this successful program has been a goal of the Court for the last few years. This year, we were fortunate enough to obtain a \$32,500 grant from United Way, which enabled us to continue to offer our youth volunteers a terrific training program as well as a show of appreciation at the end of each session. In addition, this money helped to feed the students each Thursday evening and to offer more scholarships to deserving individuals at each session. The Belden Village Kiwanis and Subway, Inc. also donate food throughout the year. Both of these organizations have been strong supporters of this program for several years and we are very thankful for their support.

The training includes a four-hour evening session and an all day Saturday program. These programs help to develop cohesiveness among the volunteers, as well as teach them about the deliberation process. The evening training includes speakers from the Victim Witness Program, prosecutor's office and by Chief Magistrate Michael Howard. At this time, the volunteer's parents are welcomed into the courtroom to observe what their teen will be doing on Thursday evenings for the next 16 weeks. The Saturday training includes a ropes program

that allows the youth to learn to work together, cooperate and trust one another. It is hoped that, the volunteers also learn to develop empathy for the defendants and their families. They realize that the defendant is not the only one affected by their actions; they also affect the community they live in and their families.

The United Way funding helped to further develop and enhance the program. To date, \$14,437.79 has been spent, the remainder of this money will be carried over to next session to continue the program in Canton and begin one in Massillon. Due to county budget cuts, the program was moved to GlenOak High School in February 2003. With this move, the Court was required to hire and pay for a security guard every Thursday for 4 hours. Grant money was used to pay for security and also to hire Allison Sarris as a part-time victim advocate and program coordinator. Grant money was also used to purchase food, hold banquets and award scholarships. A fund raising activity was held during the Hall of Fame ribs burn-off and generated \$600.00 for the Teen Court account.

Teen Court heard and closed 179 cases from October 3, 2002 through May 14, 2003. The majority of the cases brought before Teen Court were cases in which teens were charged with petty theft. Underage consumption was the second most frequent offense. Teen Court also heard cases of youth charged with curfew violation, criminal trespassing/menacing, drug abuse, disorderly conduct and public indecency.

One of the most vital components of Teen Court is the deliberation process. The individuals who participate in Teen Court continually strive to develop creative sanctions to aid the defendants. Dispositions ordered hold youth accountable, in part, through peer pressure. Peer pressure is used as a positive tool to let the defendant know that their behavior is wrong. A goal of Teen Court is not merely to punish youth, but to make them understand how their behavior affected their community, their peers, families and themselves. The sentencing process provides the defendant with ways to repair the harm they caused. In 12 cases the defendants were asked to serve on the jury

of Teen Court. This enforces the fact that these individuals are excluded from the circle of law-abiding peers. In addition, it provides insight into the thought process behind sentencing.

This year the defendants performed 1,826 hours of community service. This holds them accountable and helps them to learn from their experience. Community service was performed at places such as parks, soup kitchens, nursing homes, churches, community centers and Y's. Other creative sanctions ordered include drug and alcohol assessment, counseling, monthly urine screens, AA and NA meetings, homework journals, anger management and essays. Attention Center tours, court monitored jail tours, face-to-face apologies to parents/ guardians and written apologies to victims. This year we also worked with the Community Mediation center and assigned some youth to mediation. In addition, the jurors often assigned juveniles to the Turn Around Program at the Stark County Jail. The jurors often heard back from defendants who had been through the program and they felt it was very effective.

The victim advocate was available to make sure the victim's rights were protected and voice was heard. The victims were notified prior to the hearing and were informed of the outcome. Although many victims were not in attendance they appreciated the fact that they had a voice and that the defendants were held accountable for their actions. Restitution was often ordered and totaled \$656.92 this year. Instead of fines and court costs defendants were frequently asked to make a donation to charity. This year \$442 was donated to local charities as well as 9 articles of clothing, 1 pair of shoes, a video game and a baby rattle. Through the above sentences the defendants are practicing restorative justice principles.

Most of the Teen Court cases are referred from the Intake Department. The Juvenile division of the Prosecutor's office makes recommendations for cases to be referred to Teen Court. Finally, the Magistrates can determine at an arraignment that the case would be better handled in Teen Court and referred the case. The

criteria for case selection are that the defendant has no prior formal court record and the offense is a misdemeanor. School reports and parents reports were only used at the time of the hearing and for sentencing purposes. Based on these requirements for Teen Court eligibility the recidivism rate for the year is around 12%..

The Teen Court volunteers consisted of 36 GlenOak students, and 33 McKinley students, one Hoover student and one Massillon Washington student. Because it worked so well last year, the volunteers served two sessions for sixteen weeks. This structure provided a better understanding of the judicial system, provided a more intensive training for all participants and built a more cohesive bond among the teens, which created an improvement in the program as a whole. Year after year the driving force behind the effectiveness of this program is the peer-to-peer confrontation rather than adult to youth. The youth volunteers are given the opportunity to apply the law, argue and analyze cases and shape the legal process and its outcome. The youth volunteers take their roles to heart. On occasion the youth have gotten involved with the defendant outside of the courtroom, whether it is to tutor them or just be a friend. For many youth volunteers the cases don't end when the disposition is handed down. They often inquire about certain cases that affected them in one way or another. At times, it is difficult for them to distance themselves emotionally from the case, after hearing the defendants' story.

This year, primarily because of the United Way grant, we were able to have a banquet at the end of the first session and award scholarships. We had a party at the end of the second session where more scholarships were awarded. In all, \$3500 in scholarships was given out. Each individual was required to submit an essay on his or her experiences serving on Teen Court. A winning essay was selected for each session and awarded \$75. (The winning essay is attached to the end of this report.) In awarding the scholarship money each individual's attendance, performance, participation, and overall commitment to the program were taken into consideration. Each

participant received a t-shirt and key chain I.D. holder. As in previous years, our programs continued success would not be possible without the support and guidance of Susan Daniels and Jill Wise, McKinley and GlenOak staff representatives. Char Greenfelder volunteered several hours before retiring after the 1st session. Char conducted exit interviews, kept records of attendance and participation and, the volunteer's favorite, provided the group with countless sweets during the break. Celeste Noe, Joyce Salapack's intern, stepped in during the 2nd session to assist with exit interviews and record attendance and participation. Subway, Inc. continued to provide trays of sandwiches monthly, which were greatly appreciated. Kiwanis continued to provide food and monetary donations throughout the year.

We bid farewell to Barb Gheen, who retired from her position of Probation Officer and also from the Teen Court program after many years of involvement with the program. Patti Wilson replaced Barb and soon got acclimated to her position.

Many thanks go out to Prosecutor Jennifer Dave, Magistrate David Nist and Deputy Brian Pittman, our security officer at GlenOak. Rick DeHeer serves in numerous capacities to provide support, guidance and leadership.

This was a wonderful, yet challenging year for the Teen Court program. While the county was struggling with budget cuts, we were fortunate enough to obtain a grant to continue and build this program.

The following are excerpts provided by Teen Court Parent Evaluation forms and letters:

" I greatly appreciate the program and youths involved in it at GlenOak. I feel they've truly made a difference in a very positive way with my daughter and our family."

"I believe Teen Court gives young adults a great 'reality check'."

"It has built a closer bond between me and her. I feel the teen court has done a lot of good for her."

"This is a very wonderful program. We all want to thank you for the jobs that you do. The process lets the young adults see the system."

"I found the Teen Court to have a great impact, both emotionally and intellectually. Thank you for including us in this program."

"I can honestly say the Teen Court has helped him to analyze more than how his actions affect others-he wants to focus his actions on why and how he can have a positive impact on others. One month away from high school graduation, he has decided that law really is what he wants to study."

"I feel that this method of punishing teens is one of the most effective techniques for students to obtain a second chance at correcting their lives. I am very grateful for everything I have gone through and have learned my lesson, indeed."

"The Teen Court was run very professionally, the teens participating were all taking their job very seriously. We were impressed with the whole experience."

"This is a wonderful program! "Hats off" to the person who came up with the idea. Great work. Thank You."

### **A Lifetime of Lessons – an essay by one of the teen court participants**

For as long as I can remember, Teen Court has always been a part of my life. I can still picture my sister coming home on Thursday nights when I was in the 5th grade, telling my family and I how truly lucky we are to have each other. She would tell stories of the cases she would have each night about defendants and family, or sometimes lack thereof, involved in them. Some situations would upset her so much that she would even cry because she would say she felt so bad for those involved

because she knew that they were headed on the wrong path in life. On those nights, she would say that she felt like she did not reach the defendant and that no matter how hard she and other jury members tried, that they could not change the life path that the defendant was on. At that time in my life, I could not understand why she would join Teen Court if it upset her so much.

Since I knew Mrs. Daniels and the program through my sister, I went to visit her during the first week of high school to sign up for Teen Court. My sister had always told me what an impact it had on her life and how it was the best decision she made during her time at McKinley. Now, after being in Teen Court for four years myself, I realize why my sister loved it so much, but on the other hand could feel so distraught. Teen Court is an emotional program that teaches all involved valuable life lessons. Because of this, I see why Teen Court works so well.

Everyone involved in Teen Court, from the jury members, to the defendants to the families involved, share a part of their lives with each other. The members of Teen Court share experiences with each other once the courtroom door closes that they would not normally talk about. A great deal is learned through listening to each other's experiences as not only how they pertain to the case, but also each individual's life expresses them in general. I have gained a better understanding and respect for my peers and friends through their shared thoughts and feelings. I have also obtained numerous valuable lessons from the defendants, not just through their crimes, but also the relationships they have with their family members or guardians.

The best part of Teen Court for me is how every member of Teen Court has a lesson to share at some point in time. There may not be a connection for each individual with each defendant, but the feeling that overcomes, when you are able to connect based on your own experiences or lesson is indescribable. Everyone has their own life story that plays an important role in their everyday life that they use time and again. For example, over the years my football coaches have taught me that adversity builds

character. The majority of people coming through the doors at Teen Court are facing adversity in their own lives and when I explain that to them, I feel that they are able to understand the lesson that I am trying to instill in them. This is where I feel I reach people the most. This is when I feel the connection, which my sister had told me about so many years earlier.

Now, when I come home from Teen Court on Thursday nights and we have our family talks, I find myself wondering who was helped more that night, the defendants or myself. This is why I feel Teen Court works; it spreads the lessons of all involved and gives the opportunity to learn from one another's mistakes and ways of life. Even though I will be graduating from McKinley soon and am glad to be moving on with my life, I know that I will always remember the lessons that I have learned from all of you and Teen Court. The past four years worth of Thursdays have been exactly like my sister said it would, one of the greatest experiences of my life that I will take with me throughout the years. Hopefully, our defendants will have gained from our lessons and feel the same way when that courtroom door closes behind them on their way out to a fresh new start.

## **Youth Services Department**

**Susan Kunkle**  
**Deputy Administrator**

**Administrative Assistant-Marlene Miller**  
**Program Coordinator CASA/GAL-Helen Stavrakis**  
**Program Coordinator CASA/GAL-Laura Berkeley**  
**Restitution Coordinator-/Detention Monitor-David Baxter**  
**Citizen Review Board-Paula Graber**  
**Secretary-Barbara Motley**

The Youth Services Grant is a state subsidized program designed to assist Juvenile Courts in the development of local service options for juvenile offenders. The Grant Program became law in 1981. A significant provision contained in Am. H.B. 440 is the appointment of an Advisory Board to assist the Court in the development and review of specific service goals.

### **ADVISORY BOARD**

Mrs. Grace Chivers, Chairperson  
Mrs. Joan Gillespie  
Captain George Hogan, Jr.  
Mrs. Nancy O'Hara  
Dr. Robert Jackson  
Ms. Kathy Tatarsky  
Mrs. Jane Burt

The Community Corrections Program was a subsidy that became effective in 1990 with the passage of Am. Senate Bill 268. This subsidy was subsequently modified in 1995 and revised into what is currently titled Felony Delinquent Care and Custody Fund, i.e., "Reclaim Ohio." The purpose of "Reclaim Ohio" is to encourage Juvenile Courts to develop and use local resources for offenders who are adjudicated delinquent by reason of commission of a felonious act. The ultimate goal of "Reclaim Ohio" is to reduce the number of juveniles who are committed to the Ohio Department of Youth Services. The Stark County Family Court,

in conjunction with recommendations advanced by the Youth Services Advisory Board, has emphasized the continuation and/or development of resources in the areas of intake, probation, placement, parent training, restitution, citizen review boards, guardian ad litem appointments, psychological testing, staff training, and therapeutic intervention for juvenile sex offenders. The following are summaries of the programs funded in fiscal year 2003.

**Probation Subsidy:** This program subsidized the salaries of employees in the Probation Department and insures the availability of funds for participation in training and staff development programs.  
110 Youth Received Services:  
68% successfully completed the program  
97% did not recidivate within 3 months of successful release

**Intake Community Worker:** This program is designed to reduce the number of unruly youth handled officially through the court system and to reduce the number of youth held in detention pending adjudication. Special attention is given to school cases where the Worker serves as a liaison between the court and the school. This program served 209 non-adjudicated youth

### **Placement and Aftercare Services**

**Placement Director-Chuck Schuster**  
**Placement /Transition Services-Matt Lytle**  
**Statistical Specialist-Marguerite Nicholson**

#### **Placement Programs:**

*New Start Placement* - This program is a court operated placement alternative, which secures group home/residential placements for youth who must be temporarily removed from their parental home. This program also provides all the supportive services, necessary for the placement of such youth into alternative residences.

*Felony Placement Program* - This program serves "high" risk felony youth who must be

removed from their parental home. Such youth are placed into residential programs that provide the necessary structure and support needed to minimize the opportunities for engaging in felonious behavior while emphasizing and addressing the special treatment needs of the youngster.

Private Placements -

4 Youth Received Services:

100% successfully completed the program  
100% did not recidivate within 3 months of successful release

Multi-County Placements and Relative placements

63 Youth Received Services:

**PROP Program:** The PROP program stands for Placement Release Opportunity Program. This program gives youths who have received court placement an opportunity to remain at home while awaiting a placement bed. While in the community the youth remains on probation and is provided with additional wrap around community services. It is the intention of this program to divert the youth from placement in a residential setting to remain in the community.

13 Youth Received Services

9 Remained on Probation and were not placed

4 Violated terms and were placed in a residential facility

**Trauma Unit Program:** The Trauma Unit Program is a joint effort with the Court and Timken Mercy Medical Center. This program was developed in November and is a new addition to our court services. The youth referred to this program have been identified as individuals who have experienced personal or family trauma which may have impacted their lives. The trauma team offers assessment, consultation, critical incident debriefing, defusing, and educational seminars. Youth referred into the program receive structured individual, group and family counseling. They also engage in trauma specific activities that allow them to process their experience at their pace and comfort level.

4 youth received services

**Friends of Children:** A child advocacy program, which established Citizen Review Boards to conduct case reviews of children in out-of-home placements. These reviews are designed to insure that an adequate intervention plan, with consideration for future placement, has been instituted. This program increased in significance subsequent to the passage of Senate Bill 89.

Review Board

The Review Boards met on 70 occasions.

835 Youth Received Services:

**Guardian Program:** This program recruits, screens, and trains volunteers to serve as Guardian ad litem in the Stark County Family Court. Guardians function to protect, and consequently serve, in the best interests of children who are alleged to be abused, dependent, or neglected. Supervision, ongoing training, and consultation with all volunteers are an integral component of this program.

The Guardian ad litem were assigned to 65 cases involving 109 children/youth.

705 Youth Received Services

**Restitution Program:** This program is a victim compensation program, which emphasizes accountability for behavior. Youngsters, who have committed acts that have identifiable victims, are placed at supervised job sites. The money earned by these youngsters is used to compensate those who have been victimized by their actions.

88 Youth Received Services

89% successfully completed the program  
85% did not recidivated within 3 months of successful release.

**Sex Offender Project:** A community-based treatment program, which is operated in conjunction with the Child & Adolescent Service Center. This program addresses the needs of adolescent sex offenders by incorporating specialized intervention techniques unique to the treatment of sexually aggressive behaviors.

Clinical Referrals

30 Youth Received Services:

82% successfully completed the program  
100% of the youth did not recidivated within 3 months of successful release.



**Psychological Testing:** A testing and evaluation program designed to assist court personnel in the dispensing of cases. This program handles all youngsters who are court ordered for psychological evaluation.

**Psychological Evaluations**

A total of 36 psychological evaluations were completed.

**Grant Administration:** This program involves the overall administration and management of the Youth Services and “Felony Delinquent Care and Custody

subsidy programs. Such is inclusive of establishing sufficient fiscal and programmatic accountability, necessary to insure the integrity of all subsidy dollars received on behalf of the Stark County Family Court.

**Accountability**

- ❑ Since Inception: Over 25.5 Million Dollars have Been Received
- ❑ Fiscal and programmatic audits have been conducted each year
- ❑ There has NEVER been an audit finding or exception

## **Multi County Juvenile Attention System**

### **Donald Thernes Superintendent**

The Multi-County Juvenile Attention System is governed by a Board of Trustees and funded by the Joint Board of County Commissioners. Stark County is one of six counties that make up the Multi-County Juvenile Attention System. The other counties in the system are, Wayne County, Holmes County, Tuscarawas County, Carroll County and Columbiana County. Stark County has about 50% of the population of the six county district. The system, which began in 1970, was one of the first systems of its kind to join detention and treatment programs across a number of counties. Two distinct programs are operated by the System: one is detention or the secure holding facilities for the six member counties, called attention centers, and the second type of program is the long term treatment facilities for youth in need of structured placement out of the home.

The Stark County Attention Center, one of four attention centers in the System, admitted 2,447 juveniles in 2003. The Stark Center is currently able to hold 30 males and about 17 females. There is still one unit of the facility closed due to budget constraints. Stark County held an average of 59 juveniles in detention each day in 2003. Some Stark juveniles were held in other detention centers awaiting court disposition.

Stark juveniles were held for a total of 18,121 bed days in the attention centers of the System. Females made up 13.1% of the total beds days in detention. In 2003 the average number of days held in detention

dropped for females from 10 days to 4.4 days and for boys it dropped from 17.8 days to 13.25 days. Detention is only a short term holding facility where juveniles receive schooling and other services awaiting trials, dispositions and other placements.

The Multi-County Juvenile Attention System also operates treatment programs. Treatment programs provide educational, vocational and other services to the youth. Three group home programs, one residential program, and a Community Correctional Facility (CCF) are operated for the six county juvenile courts. The programs are designed to change behavior and return youth to their homes, family and community. 97 juveniles were served in the treatment programs operated by Multi-County accounting for 9,552 bed days of treatment. The Court averages 30 juveniles in long-term treatment daily. The CCF program had 14 males placed in the program in 2003. The following are the total number of juveniles placed in the group homes or the Residential Treatment Center operated by Multi-County in the year 2003:

	<b>2003</b>
New Philadelphia GH	6
Canton Group Home	11
Roger's Honor Farm	21
Residential Treatment	59
<b>Total Juveniles Served</b>	<b>97</b>

## **Partnership for Success Comprehensive Strategies**

Stark County is fortunate to have been one of the original five Ohio sites, selected by the Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS), for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Comprehensive Strategies Initiative. This initiative has continued from 1999 and the State is supporting our efforts and the efforts of over 15 counties now involved in what has become known as "Partnership for Success" (PFS). The plan is to coordinate, develop and enhance youth-centered efforts throughout Stark County Ohio. This plan was created acknowledging the premise that the innate strengths present in all communities are often depressed and unrealized due to negative factors [risk factors], such as extreme economic deprivation, family management problems and early/persistent antisocial behavior. The training and technical assistance grant from OJJDP was designed to prevent, control and reduce juvenile crime by taking what is already known about the causes of delinquency and developing an outcomes-based, data driven strategic plan based on the unique characteristics of individual communities and their particular needs.

Partnership for Success/Comprehensive Strategies is a community focused, research based approach to juvenile delinquency that builds on and unifies the efforts of all service and program providers. It is not just another program. It integrates the full spectrum of prevention and juvenile justice efforts in order to find the right resource for the right kid at the right time.

**Stark County continues to embrace the plan as it leads to a stronger community that can:**

- Provide prevention and intervention programs to address factors which put children at-risk for delinquency

- Develop local sanctions for juvenile offenders once they have committed a delinquent act
- Create strategies to strengthen the interaction of juvenile law enforcement

In order to complete the original plan, community members met over a period of 12 months to evaluate community data, make decisions about community risk factors, develop a vision, and identify problem behaviors. The vision accepted by the almost 100 community members involved in the project follows:

**"We envision a Stark County community that values all children and families by actively participating in the development of their potential."**

Risk Factors are conditions that increase the likelihood of youth dropping out of school and/or becoming involved in substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and/or violence. The following were identified as the five most important risk factors and associated goals:

### **Risk Factors and Goals:**

#### **Economic Deprivation**

- A community in which every child's basic needs is met.
- A community that supports and develops economic opportunities for all.

#### **Family Conflict and Management**

- Caregivers will have the skills necessary to support a healthy family.
- A community that provides the informal supports and resources to promote and develop healthy families.

**Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior**

- A community in which there is open communication and cooperation among caregivers, schools, and service providers to promote early identification and response to problem behaviors.

**Early and Persistent Antisocial Behavior**

- A community that supports each child's individual cultural, social, behavioral and educational needs.

**Academic Failure Beginning in Elementary School**

- A community that builds on the strengths of each of its children and promotes each child's academic success.

Five 'Problem Behaviors' were identified. These apply more specifically to the juvenile population. By impacting these core behaviors, the community-at-large, as well as juveniles and their families, would benefit. Each Problem Behavior has a measurable objective, which will be used to assess effectiveness.

**Problem Behaviors and Objectives:****Substance Abuse**

- Reduce the number of youth referred to Juvenile Court for alcohol and drug offenses.

**Delinquency**

- Reduce the number of delinquent juveniles as measured by the number of cases closed in Court.

**School Dropout**

- Reduce the number of youth who drop

out of school as measured by the EMIS reports issued by the Educational Resource Center.

**Violence**

- Reduce the number of violent offenses as committed by youth 10-14 years of age.

**Teen Pregnancy**

- Reduce the number of births to teen females as measured by the Ohio Department of Health from birth records.

The Court and the Stark County Family Council have taken the lead in monitoring the plan. There is ongoing monitoring that occurs through the Pooled Funds Members who act as oversight for the project.

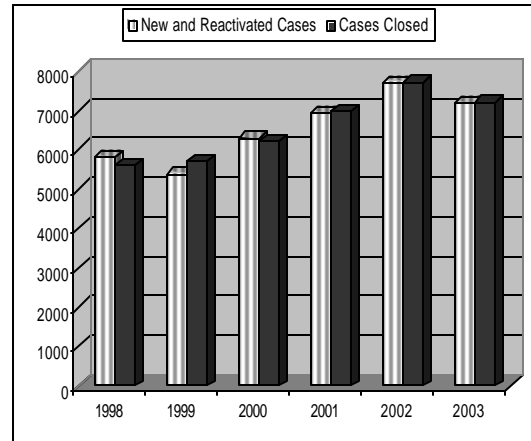
A full copy of the Comprehensive Strategies report is available by contacting one of the Judges of the Court.

## **Domestic Relations Division**

The Domestic Relations Division provides hearings and services to families that will ensure a fair, just and timely resolution of the cases brought before it. The Court hears and makes determinations in the following types of cases:

- **Divorce** - an action to terminate a marriage in which there is dispute as to the actual termination or as to any other issue – 978 cases were closed in 2003
- **Dissolution** - an action to terminate a marriage in which all of the issues are agreed to by both parties - 737 cases were closed in 2003
- **Change of Custody** - a motion filed in a case to request that the Court change the actual custody of a child to another party – 341 cases were closed in 2003
- **Visitation** - an action or motion to establish the times and days in which each parent will be with the child - 264 cases were closed in 2003
- **Support Enforcement** - an action to set, review or order the amount of child support to be paid or to establish the rules under which the support shall be paid – 2,998 cases were closed in 2003
- **Domestic Violence** - a complaint of a threat of or actual assault against a family member can be filed in domestic Relations Court - 190 cases were closed in 2003

- **Contempt Action and other cases** - a violation of the Court's orders or any special request or review by the Court – 1,719 cases were closed in 2003



## **Parenting Seminar**

All parents divorcing must complete a parent education program set up by the Court. This program is operated by community agencies and the participants must pay for this program. Three agencies, The Child and Adolescent Service Center, Trillium Family Solutions and Community Services of Stark County work with the Court and continue to offer the Court and participants a much-needed program.

## **Mediation**

Mediation services are offered in situations where child-related matters are at issue. These include Domestic Relations cases where custody and/or companionship are in dispute by the parents or where relatives may be seeking companionship rights. Mediation is also offered in Paternity cases where custody and/or companionship issues are unresolved. Referrals for

mediation are also made in parent/child conflict situations through the Juvenile Court.

Mediation services have been available to court clients since 1992. Mediation provides the parties with a process to develop mutual agreements with the assistance of a trained mediator. A Judge or Magistrate must refer parties. While attendance at the mediation sessions is mandatory, participants are not required to come to agreement. Parties always have the option to return to the court process for resolution of their issues. Throughout the years that mediation has been provided, nearly two-thirds of all participants have reached some level of agreement.

The Court expanded mediation in 1997 to include cases referred from the Juvenile Court. 85 cases of delinquency and unruly behavior were referred for mediation in 2003. Some of the mediators agreed to go to the attention center to meet with parents and juveniles who were being held. This has been very successful as many of the juveniles were able to go home after the

mediation took place.

The benefits of mediation to the parties and to the Court are many. Persons who take responsibility for finding their own solutions through a cooperative process are more satisfied with the results and more likely to abide by their agreements. They are also less likely to return to the Court with future differences. The Court benefits through having to schedule less time for trials.

#### **Number of cases referred in 2003**

Domestic Relations Cases	224
Juvenile Court Cases	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>309</b>

#### **Mediations Closed 2003**

Full Agreement-----	124
Partial Agreement -----	65
Reached own agreement -----	2
Reconciliation-----	0
Mediation Not Initiated -----	28
No Agreement -----	108
<b>Total -----</b>	<b>327</b>

# Domestic Relations Division Case Summary

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>New Cases Filed</b>					
Divorces with Children	668	647	625	596	520
Divorces with no Children	407	455	427	414	379
Dissolutions with Children	408	412	347	364	327
Dissolutions with no Children	419	500	381	442	391
Domestic Violence	166	211	210	206	191
<b>New Cases Filed - Total</b>	<b>2,068</b>	<b>2,225</b>	<b>1,990</b>	<b>2,022</b>	<b>1,808</b>
<b>Reactivated Cases</b>					
Change of Custody	294	383	401	388	355
Visitation	215	237	250	236	260
Support Modification	1,609	2,546	2,826	3,162	3,004
All Others	1,194	904	1,476	1,902	1,768
<b>Reactivated Cases - Total</b>	<b>3,312</b>	<b>4,070</b>	<b>4,953</b>	<b>5,688</b>	<b>5,387</b>
<b>New and Reactivated - Total</b>					
	<b>5,380</b>	<b>6,295</b>	<b>6,943</b>	<b>7,710</b>	<b>7,195</b>
<b>Cases Closed</b>					
Trial by Judge	505	491	546	426	344
Uncontested - Judge	331	384	398	406	580
Trial by Magistrate	1,106	988	1,009	977	979
Uncontested - Magistrate	1,111	1,228	1,020	1,113	818
Voluntary Dismissal	199	172	195	250	232
Other Terminations	2,439	2,949	3,824	4,552	4,274
<b>Cases Closed - Total</b>	<b>5,691</b>	<b>6,212</b>	<b>6,992</b>	<b>7,724</b>	<b>7,227</b>

# Domestic Relations Division

## Calendar Year 2003

### Supreme Court Report

Case type	Div Child	Div no Ch	Diss Child	Diss no Ch	Ch of Cus	Vis Enforc	SEM	Dom Viol	Others	Total	Vis Judge
BOP	322	195	42	61	114	78	313	15	111	1,251	3
New Cases	520	379	327	391	16	0	0	191	0	1,824	0
Reactivation	18	10	1	3	339	260	3,004	1	1,735	5,371	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>3,317</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>1,846</b>	<b>8,446</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Terminations by:</b>											
Judge Unc	248	164	87	81	0	0	0	0	0	580	2
Mag Unc	157	142	227	292	0	0	0	0	0	818	0
Judge Tr	52	28	1	0	18	53	66	1	125	344	0
Mag Tr	10	10	0	0	85	52	630	120	72	979	0
Vol Dism	43	33	5	9	11	18	58	9	46	232	0
Med/Concil	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Inter Appeal	10	5	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	19	0
Trans other Jud	4	2	1	0	1	3	1	1	2	15	0
Unavailability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Priv Judge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Term	44	25	16	18	226	138	2,241	59	1,472	4,239	0
<b>Total Term</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>2,998</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>1,719</b>	<b>7,227</b>	<b>0</b>



# Stark County Family Court

Hon. Judge John R. Hoffman

Hon. Judge David E. Stucki

Hon. Judge Jim D. James

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